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By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

To be continued every THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *July* the 18th, 1754.

THE following letters need no apology. With regard to the firſt, it may be proper to obſerve that the complaint contained in it is a very juſt one: of the ſecond I ſhall ſay nothing, till I have given it to my readers.

To Mr. FITZ-ADAM.

SIR,

I CAN aſſure you with great truth, that you are the firſt man I ever wrote a letter to, or wiſhed to correſpond with, except my father and my brother. I am the youngeſt of three ſiſters, am not quite twenty one, love dreſs and love faſhions, but cannot conſent to appear in the public walks like a woman of the town. I am ſorry to ſay it, but it is really my opinion, that if the

the common proſtitutes were to walk in the park with no other covering than a ſhift of Paris-net, half the young ladies of my acquaintance would come into the faſhion.

My two ſiſters may take it as they pleaſe, but they are ſo far gone in the mode, that I hardly ever go abroad with them that we are not addreſſed by gentlemen who are utter ſtrangers to us, in the moſt familiar (and ſometimes the moſt indecent) terms imaginable. No longer ago than laſt week we were mobbed in Spring-gardens, from my eldeſt ſiſter's having affronted a couple of gentlemen, who would fain have entertained us with a glaſs of wine at the Cardigan. For my own part, I tell them both very frankly, that while they endeavour to look like women of the town, it is a great miſtake in them to be above their buſineſs.

Pray, Mr. Fitz-Adam, favour us with a World upon this ſubject: for as the youngeſt ſiſter, my opinion goes for nothing; and beſides, I want to have them mortified a little: for they neither love nor eſteem me, becauſe I am ſaid to be handſomer than they, and am better received by all our relations and acquaintance.

I am, Sir,

Your very humble ſervant,

Sarah Meanwell.

Sir,

I am a very good-hearted, honeſt girl; but from my ſituation in life, I am afraid people think me otherwiſe. It is my unhappineſs that from too high a birth, and too low a fortune, I am obliged to live conſtantly with the great; and to tell you the truth, I am really handſomer than moſt of the women I mix with. From this circumſtance I am looked upon with

envy

envy by many of my acquaintance: but indeed, ſir, when you know my heart, you will rather think me an object of pity.

THOUGH I have the beſt ſpirits in the world, and am as gay as innocence will ſuffer me to be, I am called a queer creature by the men, and a prude by the women. And all this for what? Truly, becauſe I have more modeſty than the company I keep. And yet, ſo prevailing is example, and ſo neceſſary to a dependent ſtate are good-humour and compliance, that I have not been able at all times to be quite as modeſt as I ſhould be. I do not mean that I have been downright wicked, or that I ever wiſhed to be ſo; but if my grandmother was to riſe from the grave, and to be witneſs to the SENTIMENTS I have drank, and the romps I have played, ſhe would certainly box my ears, and call me by a name too coarſe for me to mention.

IF you are an old man, Mr. Fitz-Adam, you will hardly underſtand me; and as I am a young woman, I dare not come to a particular explanation. But if you will be ſo kind as to convince the people of faſhion that decency is a virtue, it would ſave me from many a rent in my clothes, and make my evenings at home, as well as my parties abroad, much pleaſanter to me.

I THINK I may be allowed to ſpeak a little plainer. The privilege of high birth is to do every thing you have a mind to do. It is a maxim with the men to attempt every thing, and with the women to refuſe but one thing. The attacks that are made upon a lady's honour, are conſidered only as compliments to her beauty; and ſhe is the moſt flattered, who is oftenеſt inſulted. Your correſpondent, Mrs. Shuffle, never ſaid a truer thing in her life, than that "cards were an aſy-

"lum

" lum againſt the dangers of men :" and I really grow fond of routs and drums, becauſe their deſigns, at ſuch parties, are only againſt my purſe.

But if women in the moſt elevated ſituations, either from their own levity, or the impudence of men, are liable to theſe faſhionable attacks, how muſt it fare with a poor girl, who has no fortune to awe theſe libertines into reſpect, and no example among her companions to authorize her reſentment? They conſtrue my very complaints into deſign—" The prude would take us in, " would ſhe? She had better be one of us, or egad " we'll blow her"—This, with a little plainer ſwearing, and coarſer threatening, has been ſaid of me in my own hearing.

What ſhall I do, Mr. Fitz-Adam, to live comfortably and preſerve my reputation? My fortune, which is no more than two thouſand pounds, is hardly ſufficient to maintain me even in the country; and I ſee nothing but ruin before me if I continue where I am. I have always conſidered the marriage ſtate as a woman's ſureſt happineſs; and I verily believe I have every qualification, except money, to make it eaſy to him who choſe me. But unleſs I tranſport myſelf to the eaſt or weſt Indies for a huſband, I have no hopes of one. I neither expect nor deſire a man of faſhion; for a clergyman I am too poor; a country ſquire would beat me, and an honeſt tradeſman who knew my education, might imagine I ſhould beat Him. Neither of theſe would be my choice: but if you know of any private gentleman, who has ſeen enough of the world to deſpiſe the follies of it; one who could ſupport me decently, and think himſelf rewarded by love and gratitude; who could ſhare with me in domeſtic pleaſures, or lend me his arm for a

viſit

viſit to a friend; who at his leiſure hours would be pleaſed with my prattle, and with a look of delight could tell me that he was happy;——if you know of ſuch a man, you may honeſtly aſſure him, that though I have lived all my life among the great, I am as clean in my perſon, and as modeſt in my inclinations, as if I had never ſeen good company. You may alſo add, and with equal truth, that, excepting a hobble in my gait, and a ſmall propenſity to talk loud in public, I have not the leaſt tincture of quality about me.

I am, SIR,

Your moſt humble ſervant,

M. A.

THE true ſpirit of irony which ſo plainly appears in this letter, muſt no doubt be highly pleaſing to the polite part of my readers. But as there are many dull people in the world, who have no conceptions beyond the literal meaning of what they read, I ſhall ſubjoin a few remarks of my own, to prevent the aforeſaid dull people from miſtaking a very fine panegyric for an inſolent libel againſt the chaſteſt and moſt valuable part of mankind.

THIS young lady ſeems to have formed her plan upon the inimitable doctor Swift, who of all men that wrote, underſtood irony the beſt; and who had the happieſt art of conveying compliment under the diſguiſe of abuſe. Her whole epiſtle is irony; which (as my ſagacious friend Mr. Nathan Bayley, in his etymological dictionary, defines it) is a figure in rhetoric, by which we ſpeak contrary to what we think. We are therefore to underſtand by the above letter, that the niceſt decorum and the moſt exemplary chaſtity are the diſtinguiſhing

characteriſtics